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(From L'Europe Artiste.)

THE FINE ARTS AND THE STAGE IN SPAIN.

On the 29th September, 1893, there ascended the throne of Charles the Fifth and Isabella the Catholic, a little girl three years old, destined to command while still a maiden, the heroic sons of old Spain, so often rendered young again by the infusion of the blood of its invaders. The child-queen was joyfully welcomed by the entire nation, which saw, without regret, the administration of Ferdinand VII. brought to a close, and centered its hopes in the regent, the Queen-Mother, whose high intelligence it foresaw, and with whose gentleness and charity it was acquainted. Queen Christina fulfilled all the expectations formed of her. Her powerful and steady hand proved her born for the august functions she exercised so happily. When History has to judge her, it will place this Queen, in whose veins runs the blood of the Cid and of the Bourbons, by the side of the greatest and most illustrious queens that ever lived. But, in addition to the qualities which predestined her for her elevated position, Queen Christina possessed personal gifts even more precious. Intelligent and accomplished, she was indifferent to no science and no art. Even when most overwhelmed by business, she was always accessible to artists and to scholars. The unfortunate was never repelled by her, for she practiced with fervor charity, which is a tradition in the Royal Family of Spain. We dwell upon these felicitous tendencies of Queen Christina, because it was she, who, by her example and by her enlightened system of management, rendered an artist and a Christian the Royal Lady who now reigns in Spain. Queen Isabella's education was entrusted to the great poet, Ventura de la Vega, who, though still young, had achieved a merited reputation. The reader will perceive from this name alone what elevation of ideas, and what artistic feeling presided over the private studies of Queen Isabella. This exceptional education, combined with her natural tendency to assimilate to herself all that is grand and beautiful, will sufficiently explain by what series of encouragement it was that, in her reign, fine arts and polite literature, almost abandoned during the period of the troubles which marked the commencement of the present century, and the reign of Ferdinand VII., again flourish, and justify us in hoping for Spain a second sixteenth century, artistic and literary.

Thanks to the Royal impulse, the arts, seized with a sudden spirit of emulation, increased their efforts, and, in a short time, re-established every branch of the Spanish School, so prolifically initiative at the epoch of the Renaissance. Of all nations, the Spaniards are, perhaps, the most favorably endowed, from an artistic point of view. Their nervous nature feels impressions more deeply than that of other peoples; their imagination possesses rare power, and the exquisite delicacy of their taste is equalled only by the grandeur of their thoughts. How comes it, then, that all these qualities, which produced for literary Spain Cervantes, Lope de Vega, Calderon, etc., and for artistic Spain, Murillo, Velasquez, Zurbaran, etc., were suddenly eclipsed, and remained so for ages? The reason was that art prospers only in a sympathetic medium; that where the arts are not honored as much as political

grandeur, they languish, wither, and eventually disappear altogether. In Spain, too, especially, where bodily idleness is a principle, a man of genius requires, to accomplish his immense task, the continuous stimulant of public admiration and of glory. In any country whatever, if, for a prolonged period, you turn the attention of the people from the works of art, you condemn that people to impotence and death. Art is a delicate plant which needs, in order to flourish, the dew of admiration. Under the influence of Queen Christina and Queen Isabella, the Spanish public soon turned their eyes towards the new essays of artists and literary men. The Peninsula once more honored, as the purest sources of its glory, the men of genius who had rendered it illustrious, and if, in 1827, it was possible that the ashes of Lope de Vega were allowed to be dispersed, like so much common dust—of Lope de Vega, the real creator of the modern stage, the author of 1,200 pieces, the author whose innovations and subjects Corneille, Moliere and Rotrou have not disdained to borrow—thirty years later, in 1857, when Quintana, the national poet, the minstrel of patriotism and of liberty, died, all classes of society combined to raise a monument to his glorious remains. Queen Isabella headed the subscription list with 10,000 reals, and the King, Don Francisco de Assis Maria, her august husband, gave as much. The reader will perceive how great a change public opinion had brought about in favor of art in a comparatively short period. The effects of this were not long in being felt, and at the present day, the arts, in Spain, are undergoing a revolution which will restore to them their old preponderance. Dramatic art especially has entered on a new path, and is destined soon to serve as a model for neighboring nations.

There are six leading theatres at Madrid, where pieces of different styles are played. The Theatre Royal, Italian opera; the Teatro del Principe, or Teatro Español, representing the traditions of national dramatic art; the Teatro de la Zarzuela, corresponding to the French Opera-Comique; the Zarzuela is especially the national opera, its name is derived from a kind of operetta, that used to be performed in the time of Philip IV., and was called a Zarzuela; the Teatro del Circo; the Teatro de las Novedades; the Teatro de las Variedades, where Spanish buffo pieces are performed.

Each of these theatres produces, on an average, every year, fifteen new pieces, including some very remarkable ones. Among the dramatic authors, or we might say, dramatic poets, for, in Spain, as among the nations of antiquity, the dramatist is above all things a poet, we must mention, by the side of Ventura de la Vega, who was professor to the Queen, Don Antonio Hartado, to whom we owe some excellent comedies, among which may be cited *El Arbol torcido*, in verse and three acts, written conjointly with the poet Aree. *Quevedo*, by Don Eulogio Florentino Sanz, is a work that places its author in the ranks of the greatest poets. Another piece, *Achaques de Vejez*, by the same author, has obtained an immense and well-merited success. Of the productions of Señor Camprodon, we may mention *La Flor de un Dia*, a delicious trifle, played more than three hundred times. Manuel Tamayo, one of the best dramatic writers, brought out, a few months since, *Un Drama nuevo*, which belongs to the finest contemporary dramatic conceptions. Finally, a hardy innovator, who is the head

of a school, at an age when others are only imitating the masters of their art, Adelardo Lopez de Ayala, a gentleman scarcely thirty, has just obtained, in two years, the greatest successes ever achieved on the Spanish stage, with *El Hombre de Estado*, and *Tanto por Ciento*, two comedies for which he received a massive gold crown, the spontaneous tribute of the people of Madrid, and his triumphal admission into the Academy. In this author, Spain sees the future great renovator of her dramatic art, and, at the present day, though we state the fact with patriotic sorrow, the Spanish stage is able to return, in the way of translations, what it has hitherto borrowed from our own.

In a country where every one is endowed with an ardent imagination, there is no want, as the reader may easily believe, of lyric poets. They are, indeed, numerous, and among them we will cite José Selgas, Martin de los Terros, Helguero, and Eugenio de Ochoa, who are the most remarkable, and, above all, the most original.

The Teatro de la Zarzuela is certainly, after the Teatro Español, that in which Spanish genius is exhibited in the most original manner. The zarzuela is a work with something of the French comic opera and the Italian buffo opera about it, but, in addition, with a certain indescribable flavor of its native country which imparts to it a happy originality. This style, also, like that of which we just now enumerated the principal productions, has, for some time past, been undergoing a revival. Numerous authors have appeared in this eminently national and popular branch of dramatic writing. Three are especially remarkable for the richness and purity of their melodies, and the individual coloring of their aspirations. They are: Barbieri, the author of *Jugar con Fuego*, an exquisitely delicate "zarzuela" in three acts. Arrieta, the author of *El Domino Azul*, also in three acts, and, lastly, Gasset, the most pure and the most elegant of the three, whose one-act zarzuela, *Una Vieja*, is simply a masterpiece. *La Cisterna encantada*, by the same, is a perfect work, which might, without suffering greatly by the process, be compared with the *chef-d'œuvre* of Boieldieu and of Hérold. The zarzuela is nearly unknown in France, where, we believe, it would easily succeed, despite, or perhaps on account, of its exotic qualities. In the interest of the managers of our lyrical theatres, we would advise them to produce one of these pieces, say *Una Vieja*, or *Jugar con Fuego*. We have said sufficient to give some idea of the ardor with which the young authors of Spain are following up the literary movement favored by the august and beneficial influence of the Queen. This influence has not been less, and has worked as efficaciously, for painting as well. Thanks to the example set by her Majesty, and under the direction of Señor Madroza, a distinguished painter, and head of one of the divisions in the Fine Arts section of the Ministerio del Fomento, annual public exhibitions for living painters were got up at Madrid. It was not long before the happy results of this measure were evident, and, though it is only for the last few years that these exhibitions have been periodic and annual, several young reputations have been created by this public competition, the most fertile of all stimulants to emulation. The qualities of the old Spanish School live again, to a great extent in the pictures of contemporary artists. Boldness of design and energy of coloring, combined

with great correctness of tone, and with exactitude of pose, such are the native gifts that old Spain bestows on the palette of her children. One of the distinctive characteristics of this school is to be found in the swagger, the dash, the spectator feels in the canvases, even if he does not perceive the ardent faith imparted by fanaticism to the faces of the monks. But soldiers, monks, or bandits, all exhibit the proud attitude which results from the sentiment of strength, and contempt for death. We will not give here the names of all the remarkable painters, who, thanks to the annual exhibitions, have been revealed to the public. It is the same with painters as with poets: they abound and excel in all countries cherished by the sun. The most renowned artists in Spain are, in addition to Don Francisco Madrazo, already named, Riveira, Gisbert, and Casado, for historical painting, and Palmaroli, for genre painting.

In sculpture, Spaniards possess less power. It seems as though color were a necessity for art in a country where warm tones abound. There is only one sculptor, Piquier, worthy of figuring side by side with the illustrious painters we have named above. At our own annual exhibitions in the Champs Elysées, pictures by Spaniards have often been deemed worthy of medals by the Jury. This very year the painter of the *Testament of Isabella the Catholic* has obtained a gold medal, and been proposed for the Grand Medal of Honor. This mark of distinction, gained in a country where the arts are justly believed to be more skillfully cultivated than anywhere else, proves better than aught we could say the excellence of the new Spanish School. At the Exposition Universelle, the display of Spanish paintings is very remarkable. All the pictures give proof of the high merit of the artists, and some are productions of the first class. The scanty space at our disposal does not allow us to extend our remarks on this exhibition, to which we intend devoting an especial article. To sum up, we are happy to state that arts and literature have resumed in Spain the place they ought to occupy in every civilized nation. This result is due to the encouragement lavished on them first by Queen Christina and then by Queen Isabella, whom Posterity will thank for what she has done. Marshal Narvaez, Duke of Valencia, first minister of the Queen, is himself an enlightened amateur, and it is not under his administration that the Government will abandon its traditions as patron of the arts. During the ten years that Queen Christina has resided in France, with the Duque de Rianzaraz, her husband, she has never ceased thinking of her country, and of the arts she caused to revive there. It is only just to say that no Queen ever had such a claim to the gratitude of the intelligence of Spain. The nation is at present in the right path; a Spaniard is eminently intelligent and artistic; the long intestine wars which laid waste the country may have occasioned a momentary stoppage, but thanks to a Queen possessing artistic feeling, Spain will soon resume the position she ought to occupy among the nations rendered great by art and literature.

E. CHAVET.

Mr. Henry Thomson, the eminent surgeon, husband of the accomplished pianist and composer, formerly so well known as Miss Kate Loder, has just received the honor of knighthood. Lady Thomson is passing the summer months at Brighton.

THE HEREFORD FESTIVAL.

WEDNESDAY, Aug. 21.

At the performance of *Elijah* in the Cathedral this morning, Madame Goldschmidt made her first appearance, and every seat was occupied. I put these two incidents thus close together, because their connection was obvious, notwithstanding the undoubted popularity of Mendelssohn's masterpiece. The coming here of her who was once known as the "Swedish Nightingale" is the great event of the week; an event so great as almost to dwarf everything else. People still speak of Madame Goldschmidt as "Jenny Lind," and walking through the streets one can hear the familiar name on every hand. Round the Cathedral there was, of course, unwonted animation. The crowd of lookers-on being considerably larger than yesterday; not a few, probably, hoping to catch a sight of the famous singer, whose presence has conferred such importance upon the Festival. In the oratorio, Madame Goldschmidt took the principal soprano music of the first part only, that in the second being allotted to Mdlle. Tietjens. Of course, therefore, her chief effort was made in the scene where the son of the Shunamite widow is restored to life. Those who know the intense absorption of Madame Goldschmidt in her work, and the wonderful combinations of earnestness and intelligence she brings to its performance, will not require to be told what an effect she made in the impassioned music of her part. The agony of the bereaved mother expressed in the passage, "Help me, man of God!" her pathos when she says, "I go mourning all the day long," the mingled incredulity and hope of her ejaculation, "Wilt thou show wonders to the dead," and the joy almost overborne by astonishment with which she utters, "The soul of my son reviveth," were so brought out by the singer, that the entire incident seemed almost a present reality to the audience. Years have produced their inevitable effect upon the voice which once cast a spell over every listener, but the instinct of the artist remains strong as ever, and asserted, this morning, all its old power. To make the *Elijah* performance still more remarkable, Mdlle. Tietjens exerted herself in the music of the second part with even a greater success than usual. Her delivery of "Hear ye, Israel," has rarely, if ever, been excelled for beauty of voice, and breadth of style; and no less in every bar, that fell to her share, did she display those great qualities to which she owes her position as a singer in oratorio. The contralto music was divided between Miss Julia Elton and Madame Patey-Whytock, the former taking Part I., and distinguishing herself in the solemn air, "Woe unto them that forsake him;" the latter singing the important music in the second part, with commendable skill and judgment. "O rest in the Lord" was not particularly successful, but the music of Jezebel in the scene where she incites the people to kill Elijah was given with all necessary energy, and produced a very legitimate effect. The whole of the tenor music fell on Mr. Montem Smith, who zealously endeavored to acquit himself well of his arduous task, not without an encouraging degree of success. His delivery of "If with all your hearts" was evidently to the taste of the audience; but with "Then shall the righteous shine," having to sing it with a fatigued voice, he was not so success-

ful. Mr. Weiss took the part of the prophet throughout, and rendered the music much as usual. How that is, no one needs to be told, since he has been for so many years the recognized representative of Elijah. The choruses were given in a manner affording little scope for adverse criticism, the singers proving conclusively, what was made nearly certain yesterday, that they are above the average in capacity and intelligence. With one or two exceptions, the time of the various "numbers" was correct, and the entire performance reflected credit on all concerned.

(From the Franco-American, Paris.)

PARIS, Aug. 22.

Musical instruments at the Exposition, and the uncovering of the new Opera-house have been the subjects of interest in Paris circles this week. I shall devote a special correspondence to the forms in a subsequent letter, and before I proceed to describe the new edifice will but mention in the American department the Chickering piano, now called the king of all pianos. Hereditary right to title may be contested, as Messrs. Chickering and Sons, our contemporaries, have themselves founded this novel monarchy; but their factory in Tremont-street, Boston, if not a regal manor, is a palace in the factory style, and occupies a space of no less than 206,000 feet. It would be interesting to lead my readers all over the building, but it is fearfully complete in every detail, and neither breadth, width, nor height, could be given to it in the few lines I can here dispose of.

The object of the building being the manufacture of the pianos themselves, I will simply resume the points which so essentially make them surpass others in perfection. Firstly, quality, power, and unity of sound; secondly, neat and delicate power of touch; the kind, quality, and durability of finish. The following are the names of the artists who have consecrated the above remarkable qualities by testimonials of the highest approbation:—Thalberg, Benedict, Black, Gottschalk, Wehli, Richard Hoffman, Poznanski, &c. The latter gives a *stance* every day at the Champ de Mars between three and five o'clock, which draws eager crowds around the American section, who stand in a large circle listening to the different effects of modulation produced by the clever artist. I say that people have to stand, which, alas, is proverbial, for many remain thus stationary till they are ready to drop, always excepting our *élégantes*, who are drawn up to the pianos in garden chairs by officials in red and grey uniforms. There they delightfully recline with half-closed eyes savoring the musical treat, all the more acceptable because it is gratis.

It surprises no one that the French jury of 1867 should have imitated the English jury of the London Exhibition by awarding the medal of honor to Messrs. Chickering and Sons; but many were astonished that the Emperor should in person have accompanied the presentation with the decoration of the Cross of the Legion of Honor, the sole distinction of the kind awarded to emulating exhibitors. Some of the sweetest memories of the Exposition will be those of visitors who have regularly attended Mr. Poznanski's trial of Chickering's instruments. From such music to the opera, gradation is easy. Amateurs of grand things gratis have not ceased gathering round the noble edifice since the scaffoldings fell from it on the 15th August.

The opera forms the centre of that space